PROSPERITY OR POVERTY?

WINIFRED BLACK VISITS MARK HANNA.

WHEN I went to Washington to see Senator Mark Hanna I had not the least sense of the tremendous importance of my mission. I have seen a good deal of poverty of late. I have seen men starving and women going mad for want of food. I have seen little children dying of famine, and I have seen old women who cried and beat their breasts and call on the God of Israel to send some hope into their desperate days.

I have seen whole towns wiped out of existence, and I have seen mills shut down and factories close, and I have looked upon the dead faces of men and women who have killed themselves rather than to die from hunger like a starved dog.

I have seen all these things within the space of a few weeks and within the compass of a day's ride on the train from the richest city in America.

I wanted to tell Senator Hanna about some of these things. He is a busy man. He may not know of them.

I wanted to hear what he would say about poverty and what he would think about prosperity.

I wanted to ask him some questions—some perfectly plain, everyday questions—about some perfectly plain, everyday things. I thought that it was a perfectly easy thing to do.

I thought that Senator Hanna might be glad of an opportunity to explain a few little things like the suicides and the failures and the strikes which have come with his "prosperity."

So I went to Washington to see him. I drove from the station to the hotel in a queer little rickety carriage with a gorgeous and resplendent negro coachman to drive. The street was bordered with great spreading trees, and at every few blocks we came upon a little three-cornered park ablaze with Southern roses. The pavement was as smooth as a polished floor.

"Nevah been in Washington befo'?" said the coachman, beaming at me.

"No," said I.

"Mighty pretty town, Washington," said the coachman.

"Here comes the Treasury." He pointed with his whip. "You saw the monument down there? Here's Pennsylvania avenue. Here comes the Senator."

"Senator who?" said I.

The coachman turned and rolled a round and astonished eye at me.

"Senator Hanna," he said. "Him that runs things.

"That's him—that stout gentleman in kind of a lightish gray. "See 'em all after him!"

The stout gentleman in lightish gray was walking down the street in a great hurry.

His face was very red, and he stepped pompously. Two men walked with him, and six or seven walked behind him.

The men who walked with him were listening with eager deference to something he was saying.

The men who halted behind him looked at once eager and despondent.

"Office seekers," said the coachman.

Then I went to the Capitol and sat in the marble anteroom of the Senate Chamber and sent in a note to a Western Senator I know.

The Western Senator came out and talked about the climate of his State and about Washington and about being homesick. And then he asked what he could do for me.

"I want to see Senator Hanna," said I.

"Oh!" said the Western Senator. "Well, Senator Hanna is a very busy man."

"So they say," said I.

The Western Senator gave me a very urgent letter to Senator Hanna, and I went up into the ladies' gallery and waited to see the busy Senator appear.

The galleries were full of people—strangers and sightseers, most of them.

Senator Cannon, of Utah, was speaking. He was very eloquent. He talked about the freedom of the American people. He spoke of their opportunities, and he drew a glowing picture of the sterling character and honest independence of the real American.

A man with a pointed beard and eyebrows like a stage Mephisto leaned out of the diplomats' gallery and listened with a sardonic smile.

The ladies in my gallery whispered to each other. "Isn't he eloquent?" they said.

Some of the Senators listened to the speech. Some of them wrote letters, some of them talked together and some of them yawned.

The pages ran in and out with messages. Senators came in, sat a moment and went out again, but Senator Hanna did not come.

When the Senate adjourned I walked out behind a bridal couple.

"Wasn't it mean," said the bride. "Senator Hanna didn't come."

"Well," said the bridegroom, "Senator Hanna is a very busy man."

I went up to the hotel where Senator Hanna lives.

There were eight people waiting for him. "I've been here since 9 this morning," said an old withered woman. "The man says he'll be in any minute.

"The Senator is a very busy man," said a bustling, fox-faced little man with an alert and anxious eye.

Senator Hanna did not come to his hotel to dinner.

For two days I stayed in Washington and heard about Senator Hanna.

I met all sorts and conditions of people, and every one talked of Senator Hanna. No one said much about the President, except a diplomat, and he said:

"We hear that President McKinley is a man of the most domestic tastes truly, a husband of the most devoted kind. American ladies must admire greatly this model of an American husband."

On the third day I met Senator Hanna.

Every human being is in some way a caricature of some particular animal.

Senator Hanna belongs to the genus pig. He looked exactly like a clean, well-groomed, well-fed, cunning-eyed, educated pig, dressed in gray clothes. He didn't act like a pig. He was rather pleasant. He shook hands, and he asked me how I liked Washington, and he said he was afraid it was going to be hot, and his little shining eyes twinkled cunningly at me, just as an educated pig's eyes twinkle when he's going to spell D O G, or do some other of his clever tricks.

He talked generalities for a minute or two, and then he made an appointment with me for 9 o'clock the next morning.

When I went back to the hotel I found that I was regarded as a wonderfully fortunate being. The Man of the Hour had actually spoken to me!

The bride sat at my table. She was openly envious.

"I shall feel real mean going home," she said. "I've seen the Capitol and the monument and the President and the White House and the whispering gallery, but I haven't seen Senator Hanna, and I wont see him now."

"Well," said the bridegroom, "I'd a liked to see him. Any man that can make $20,000,000 out of nothing is worth going a good ways to see."

"That's right," chimed in an Early American, who sat at the bride's table.

I call him an Early American, because he looks just like the pictures of great men in the old American histories. He and his wife had come to Washington on their silver wedding trip. They lived out West in a little prairie village, and they had a "store" there, and they had planned the Washington trip ever since they were married.

"Mother, she was always possessed to see Washington," said the Early American. "We couldn't go on a wedding trip when we were married, an' we always 'lotted on comin' some day or other. And, sure enough, here we be. We're glad we came. It's a long ride on the cars, but we're glad we came. I feel a good deal younger. It's a fine city, and I'm proud of it. I guess it makes some of those foreign fellows open their eyes. We saw the President yesterday. He took us by the hand, real cordial. I helped to elect him. I told him so, and he seemed real pleased. I liked to see Senator Hanna, to speak to, I mean. We saw him in the Senate. He looked just like the Mayor of your town at home. Kind o' prosperous, an' strong-headed. He's a pretty big man.

"Times aint so good out West as they was, an' I don't suppose mother and me will get so far from home again, but we're glad we came. Farmers aint doin' much out our way. Crops are good, never better, but it don't pay to harvest 'em. There was some talk of more mills goin' up, but they haven't yet, and seems to me times get harder every year now. I don't see how it is. Folks want too much, I guess. That's what our son says. Our son, he's got a mine down here in Pennsylvania. He has a lot of trouble with it. He says the miners aint never contented. He says they want to make as much money as the President of the United States. If he goes to cut down their wages, when he's got to, to keep things movin', they up an' strike and make a terrible to-do. Says you'd think he was robbin' 'em. An' he's willin' to give 'em work the year 'round, too.

"We're goin' to visit him on our way home. He's doin' real well. Got a big house, and a whole slew o' servants. Started out in the stove business, same as I did, but my, he's got a head on him, an' I never did have for money. He gets real put out with me sometimes, the way I do things at home. He says business is business, but my! I've got to treat my neighbors like neighbors when times get hard. It aint as if they was strangers, you know. But son, he can't see it. He left my store when he was quite a boy, because I would trust, when times got hard.

"He's a great fellow, Son is. Talks so kind o' hard-hearted—an' yet he gives lots to the church, an' he sent mother an' me the money for our trip. Would make us take it, and said we should put up at the best hotels they had. Seems kind o' wasteful, payin' regular price, an' not eatin' half that's set before you, but Son, he'd be mad if we didn't do as he said. He's a big McKinley man. Sent all his miners into town on a special train to vote for him. He knows all the ins and outs of politics, Son does. He knows Senator Hanna. He says he's a real good man. He and him has stood together in one of them lake strikes. Son's got some lake property. He says sailors are as bad as miners to get along with, but he says him an' Hanna know how to fix 'em, so it's all right.

"Mother, she felt awful the other day. She read in the paper about some miners that was starvin' an' she couldn't stand it, but I told her it was all talk. Son says so. He says them that starve, starve just out o' ugliness. And Son knows. He's got dealin's with them. I tell mother she can see for herself when we visit Son. He'll take us to the mines and let us see the whole thing. Ever seen a coal mine?"

"Yes," said I.

"In Pennsylvania?" said mother, eagerly.

"Yes," said I.

"Where was it?"

I told them where it was, and the two old faces fairly shone.

"Why, it must have been Son's mine," said Mother, eagerly.

"Well, well. Aint the world small? I'll tell him about it. He'll take us all through and we'll see all there is to see. Son, he's told us all about it a hundred times, but there's nothin' like your own eyes; is they, Mother?"

"No," said Mother, smiling; "they aint."

And I thought of the men who work in those mines, the starving, browbeaten, hopeless, heart-broken men. And of the womenkind and children of the mines, the women who look like beaten animals, and the children who die for want of decent food. I thought of the men who worked for this very Son of theirs—men who risk their lives every day for a pittance which is not enough to keep body and soul together, and of "Son" and his pretty wife, and his rosy children and his fine house, and of "Son" himself, with his hard eyes and his gross mouth, and his greed, and his cruelty, and his utter want of human sympathy for the wretched creatures who are his slaves—and I wondered how he would explain things to "Mother."

"Well," said the Early American, pushing back his plate. "I'm going to try and see Senator Hanna. I've tried once or twice, but he's pretty busy. Mother, she's set and determined to ask him about those miner stories."

"I tell you," said I, "I have an appointment with him. Why don't you come with me. You'll be sure to catch him then."

We went to the Senator's office.

"The Senator has gone out," said the secretary.

"But the appointment——?"

The secretary looked very grave.

"The Senator is a very busy man," he said. "You know he is the Man of the Hour, now."

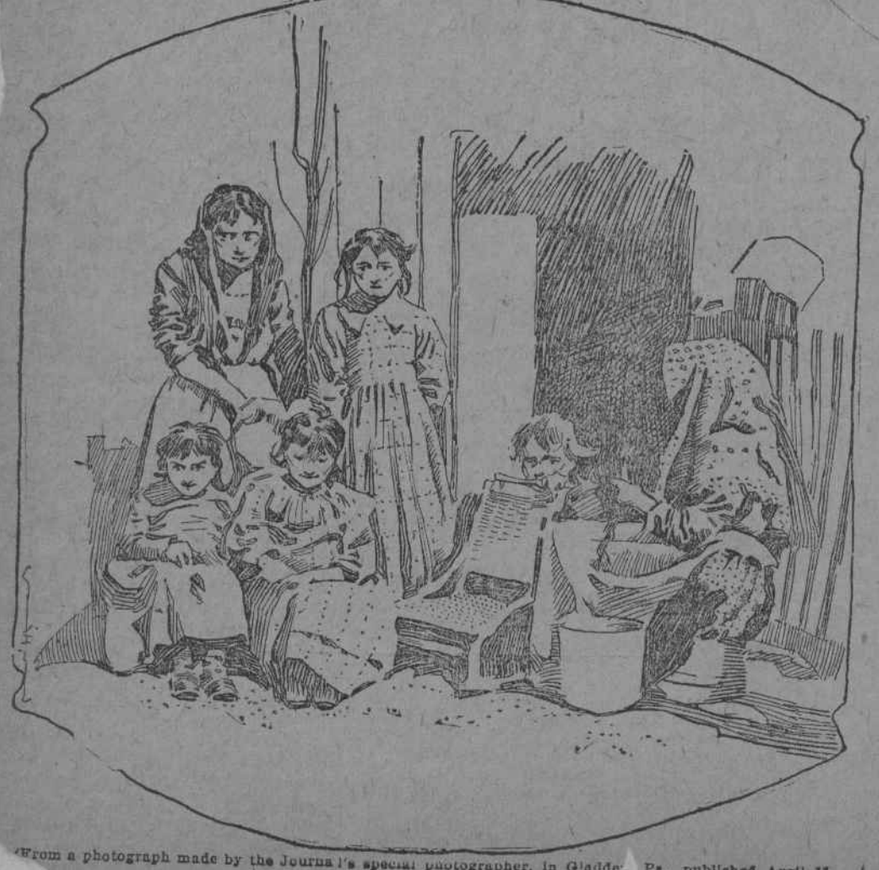
And that is all I ever saw of the "Man of the Hour," the man who dominates Washington as a giant lotus among pygmies, the man who would be chosen by the intelligent foreigner as the American type.

I wish he had had time to see "Mother." I would have liked to hear her ask him about the miners and the sailors.

I wonder what he would have said.

WINIFRED BLACK.

"I pictured myself talking to him tete-a-tete. I wanted to hear what he would say about Poverty and what he would think about Prosperity. I wanted to ask him questions—some perfectly plain, everyday questions—about some perfectly plain, everyday things. I thought it was a perfectly easy thing to do." But "The Senator is a Very Busy Man."



From a photograph made by the Journal's special photographer, in Gladden, Pa., published April 11.

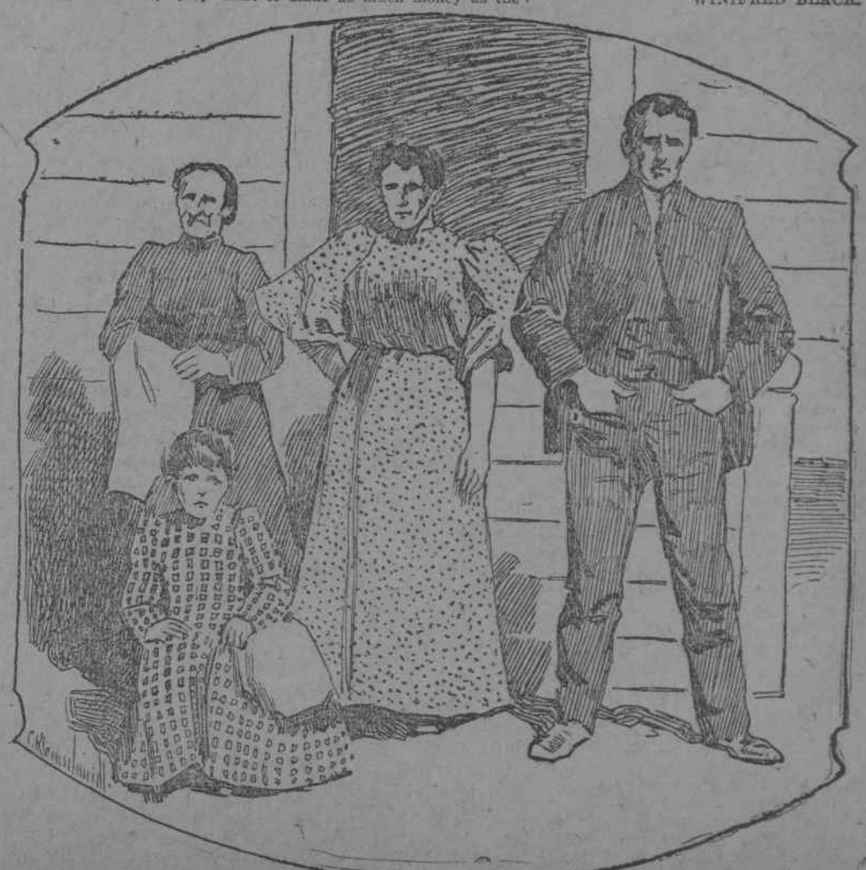
How About the Supperless Miners, Mr. Hanna?

"Wtihin a radius of fifty miles of this city there are probably more than 30,000 miners and their families. If you were to go from one to another, I give you my word that fully half of them will tell you they do not know where their supper is to come from."—From an interview with an officer of the United Mine Workers of America, in Pittsburg, published in the Journal April 11.

And

What of the Starving Village of Gladden?

"To grasp the horror of it all, you must remember that this village of Gladden is only one out of a thousand such settlements, where to a greater or less extent the same conditions of agony and privation and keen hunger prevail."—From the report of the Journal's commissioner to the Pennsylvania mining districts, published April 11.



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